

Israeli Attorney General Orders Criminal Probe into Netanyahu Spending



Tel Aviv, July 22 (RHC)-- The Israeli attorney general has ordered a criminal investigation into financial misconduct of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

An official of the Israeli ministry of judicial affairs, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Tuesday that Attorney General Yehuda Weinstein's decision to order the criminal probe into Netanyahu's excessive spending follows a preliminary inquiry into case in February.

On February 26, the office of Weinstein said in a statement that the evidence collected from Netanyahu's official residence and his private home, and the testimonies of a former employee at the residence convinced judges to launch a preliminary probe into the case.

The attorney general's office "believes that the variety of affairs justifies a probe, at the end of which it will be decided whether to launch a criminal investigation," the statement issued in February added.

The Israeli premier faces accusations of transfer of furniture bought for his official residence to his holiday home in the city of Caesarea in the occupied Palestinian territories, and use of public money to pay an

electrician to work in his property there.

The inquiry will also examine reports that Sara, Netanyahu's wife, collected at least USD 1,000 from the deposits on empty bottles returned from the official residence during the premier's previous term in office.

The Netanyahus have reportedly dismissed the reports as a smear campaign. Over the last few years, a number of reports have surfaced about Netanyahu family's expensive living style. In one instance, USD 127,000 of public funds was spent on a sleeping cabin in a plane.

Netanyahu's wife has also come under fire for her lavish tastes and abusive behavior against servants.

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